DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 276 089 EA 018 228

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TITLE Supervisors' Performance Ratings Correlated with Selected Personal Characteristics of Attendants in a Mental Retardation Developmental Center.
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 13p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Attendants; Group Homes; *Job Performance; *Mental Retardation; *Personality Assessment; Personality Measures; *Personnel Evaluation; *Residential Institutions; Supervisors

ABSTRACT

A research study investigated the relationship between personal characteristics and selected demographic data of 75 attendants in a mental retardation developmental center and the assessment by 24 administrators of the attendants' job performance. Instruments used included a 20-item Direct Care Performance Scale and the Demographic Data Scale, which collected information in 8 areas: work experience, civic and community involvement, educational level, sex, age, marital status, home environment, and birth order. Also used was the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire comprised of 105 forced-choice questions. The variable "years of work experience" derived from the Demographic Data Scale was found to be the most significant independent variable in predicting attendants' job performance. Significant relationships were found between job performance and personality factors of conservative, stable, suspicious, relaxed, and practical. Appended are 12 references and 3 tables of the statistical measures used to analyze the data: analysis of variance, stepwise multiple regression, and analysis of covariance. (MLF)

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Supervisors' Performance Ratings Correlated with Selected Personal Characteristics of Attendants in a Mental Retardation Developmental Center

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EA 015 225

Supervisors' Performance Ratings Correlated with
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Personal characteristics, including demographic data and their relationship to an individual's job performance, have been the subject of numerous research studies not only in educational settings but in business, industry, and other social service fields as well. Close analysis of the research for educational settings, especially mental retardation facilities, shows utilization of such variables as tenure (Butterfield & Warren, 1963); age (Cleland, Seitz & Patton, 1967); dogmatism (Elmore & Ellett, 1979); sex (Rice, et al., 1980, Bensberg & Barnet, 1966); motivation (Patton, 1961, Hertzberg, 1959) and wages (Richardson, 1971, Schuster, 1977, Dreher, 1978).

Although diverse in nature, these and similar studies suggest that certain personal and demographic characteristics do, indeed, influence job performance, and may be significantly related to appropriate criteria for evaluation. Such data indicate the possibility of enhancing selection and retention procedures of qualified personnel likely to be successful attendants and consequently, dramatically affect policies, procedures, dollar resources and the direct services to be delivered to residents.

With a small but noticeable tendency to move from larger state developmental centers to more privately-owned and operated community group homes for the mentally retarded (Northwest Ohio Developmental Center, 1981), group home operators will exercise greater control over hiring employees, conceivably resulting in a wide variance in personnel expectations and qualifications. This, coupled with the suggestion that some individuals with personality problems are likely to be

attracted to the various mental health professions (Barlow, 1966; Smith, 1967) provide incentive to strengthen selection criteria.

This article presents data from a research study conducted at Bowling Green State University which investigated the relationship between personal characteristics and selected demographic data of 75 attendants in a mental retardation developmental center and their administrators' assessment of job performance. Implications for administrators regarding use of such data in selection and retention of individuals who work with the mentally retarded in educational and other similar facilities are examined.

Methods

This study, using responses from attendants (N=75) in a state-operated residential facility for the mentally retarded and their supervisors (N=24) was to investigate the relationship between the independent variables of individual demographic data and personality characteristics of attendants and the dependent variable of their performance scores as rated by their supervisors. All data-gathering was conducted by the investigator and a few trained staff in a standardized manner, using approximately one-half hour sessions. Refreshments were available to participants to minimize test fatigue.

Data Source

Direct Care Performance Scale

Content validity for the Direct Care Performance Scale (DCPS) which was developed by the investigators for use in this study is based on the State of Ohio Civil Service Job Specifications and reviews by five experts in the field. The review panel also revised

and rank-ordered items on the 20-item scale. The scale uses a Likert-type response of one to five with one signifying a very inaccurate description of the attendant's behavior by the statement and five representing a very accurate description of the attendant's behavior by the statement. Reliability of the DCPS was .95 (Cronbach coefficient alpha technique), using a sample of 36 hospital aides rated by nine supervisors in a center other than the one used for the study's population.

Demographic Data Scale

The Demographic Data Scale (DDS) developed by the researchers based on a review of the literature, collects information in eight areas: work experience, civic and community involvement, educational level, sex, age, marital status, home environment, and birth order. Content validity was attained by use of a team of experts who modified the form to reach agreement on its purpose. Average time to complete the 16-item scale was 10 minutes.

Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire

The Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) (Cattell, Eber, Tatsouka, 1974) is a multiple-choice questionnaire with four different forms, A, B, C, & D. This study used the pencil and paper test, Form C, comprised of 105 forced-choice questions. Test-retest reliability reported for Forms C and D ranged from .67 to .86, with two to seven-day intervals. The norms are based on high school, college, and general public populations. The 16 primary source traits (i.e., reserved vs. outgoing, humble vs. assertive, shy vs. venturesome, trusting, adaptable vs. suspicious, relaxed vs. tense) as well as seven broad influence patterns (four second-order factors:

introversion vs. extraversion, adjustment vs. anxiety, tenderminded emotionality vs. tough poise, and subduedness vs. independence and three derived-criterion scores: neuroticism, leadership, and creativity) were obtained for each of the attendants.

Results

Analysis of covariance was used to investigate relationships between attendants' performance scores and the non-continuous variables from Demographic Data Scale. The probability levels of the demographic variables ranged from .13 to .98. Sex ($p < .13$) was the only variable that indicated a relationship that suggests further exploration (see Table 1).

Stepwise multiple regression was used to analyze results for H_2: There is a significant relationship between attendants' performance scores and the continuous variables of each of the 23 factors of the 16PF and six DDS variables: work experience, civic and community activities, age, number of children in present home and birth order. The probability for the overall model was significant, with a modest predictive relationship ($r = .35$, $p < .0001$). As indicated in Table 2, the factors accounting for most of the variation in job performance were years of work experience ($r = 16.3$, $p < .001$) followed by: practical ($r = 05.1$, $p < .05$), relaxed ($r = 04.1$, $p < .05$), suspicious ($r = 04.1$, $p < .04$), conservative ($r = 03.7$, $p < .03$) and stable ($r = 02.0$, $p < .15$).

Analysis of covariance was used to investigate which variables [of the 39 collected measures (16PF = 23, DDS = 16) working in concert] were significant in predicting attendants' performance scores. Results noted in Table 3 indicate that the correlation of job

performance with years of work experience and the conservative (16PF) variable were significant at the .01 level. Among the 16PF factors, suspicious was correlated with job performance at the .05 level. At the .10 level, job performance was correlated with the relaxed and stable variables and the female sex factor.

Conclusion

It was found that the variable years of work experience derived from the Demographic Data Scale was the most significant independent variable in predicting job performance of attendants in a mental retardation development center. In previous studies, years of work experience was identified only as an important dependent variable. For example, Butterfield & Warren (1963) noted that long tenure is a necessary condition of effectiveness as an attendant, but were not clear on whether or not long tenure is a sufficient condition to being an effective attendant. Further, the conservative view and the stable view as with Cattell and Shotwell (1954) were identified with more successful attendants. Significant relationships among the 16PF factors identified in this study but not in others were the suspicious, relaxed, and practical.

The findings of this study suggest that one should weigh carefully the variable of work experience in selection and employment of attendants in mental health facilities. It is important to note that on-the-job experience in this setting may be more predictive of high performance ratings by superiors than other more commonly used criteria such as academic test scores, age, I.Q., personality traits and sex (not withstanding recent affirmative action regulations). Other factors such as discipline records, absenteeism rate, and

letters of recommendation could also contribute more detail and amplification of work experience and its relationship to success in employment.

While determinants of effectiveness are hard to identify, daily experience with the mentally retarded appears to strengthen job performance skills on the part of attendants. Further, the human resources expended by administrators in hiring or disciplinary action for less successful employees may be minimized if specific characteristics could be identified as predictive of successful attendants. The authors believe that this research has underlined the importance of job experience in attendant performance success in the institutional setting of this investigation. Moreover, such research adds an important dimension to defining a model focused on identifying measurable human attributes and characteristics predictive of employee success in the workplace.

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Table 1

Analysis of Variance: Non-continuous Variables

Dependent Variable: Performance		Probability* for the model .67
Independent Variables	Degree of Freedom	Probability* for Items
Non-Direct Care Work with Mentally Retarded	1	0.41
Mentally Retarded Person Living in the Home	1	0.68
Shift Worked	2	0.56
Part/Full Time Worker	1	0.62
Education	1	0.77
Sex	1	0.13
Marital Status	2	0.62
Environmental Background	1	0.55
Number of People at Home	2	0.98
(All Variables are from the Demographic Data Scale)		

*Chance of making a Type I error if we reject the null.

Table 2

Step Six Multiple Stepwise Regression: Continuous Variable

Intercept	Percentage of Variance in Job Performance (r^2)	Probability* for Model = .0001 Probability*
Years of Experience	16.3	0.001[a]
16PF Factor M (PRACTICAL Variable of the Practical Imaginative continuum)	05.1	0.05[b]
16PF Factor Q_4 (RELAXED Variable of the Relaxed Tense, Driven continuum)	04.1	0.05[b]
16PF Factor L (SUSPICIOUS Variable of the Trusting Suspicious continuum)	03.4	0.04[b]
16PF Factor Q_1 (CONSERVATIVE Variable of the Conservative Experimenting continuum)	03.7	0.03[b]
16PF Factor C (STABLE Variable of the Easily Upset Calm, Stable continuum)	02.0	0.15
Total Percentage of Variance Accounted for in Job Performance	34.6	

*Chance of making a Type I error if we reject the null hypothesis

[a]Correlation Significant at .001

[b]Correlation Significant at .05

Table 3

Analysis of Covariance: Continuous and Non-continuous Variables

Dependent Variable: Performance		Probability* for Model = .0001
Independent Variables	Degrees of Freedom	Probability
Years of Work Experience (From the Demographic Data Scale)	1	0.01[a]
16PF Factor Q_1 (CONSERVATIVE Variable of the Conservative Experimenting continuum)	1	0.01[a]
16PF Factor L (SUSPICIOUS Variable of the Trusting Suspicious continuum)	1	0.03[b]
16PF Factor Q_4 (RELAXED Variable of the Relaxed Tense, Driven continuum)	1	0.06[c]
Sex (From the Demographic Data Scale)	1	0.09[c]
16PF Factor C (STABLE Variable of the Easily Upset Calm, Stable continuum)	1	0.10[c]
16PF Factor M (PRACTICAL Variable of the Practical Imaginative continuum)	1	0.11
Total percentage for variance accounted for in job performance = 37.4		

*Chance of making a Type I error if we reject the null hypothesis

[a]Correlation significant at .01

[b]Correlation significant at .05

[c]Correlation significant at .10